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Dr. *Mayhew's*

DISCOURSE

On *Rev.* XV. 3d. 4th.

Occaſioned by the

EARTHQUAKES

In *November* 1755.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A

DISCOURSE

On *Rev.* XV. 3d, 4th.

Occaſioned by the EARTHQUAKES
In *November* 1755.

Delivered in the Weſt-Meeting-Houſe,
Boſton, Thurſday *December* 18, following.

In five Parts, with an INTRODUCTION.

Part I. Of the Greatneſs of God's Works.
Part II. Of their marvellous and unſearchable Nature.
Part III. Of the moral Perfections and Government of God.
Part IV. Of our Obligation to fear, glorify and worſhip Him.
Part V. Practical Reflections upon the Subject, relative to the Occaſion.

By *Jonathan Mayhew*, D. D.
Paſtor of the Weſt Church in *Boſton*.

They ſhall ſpeak of the Glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy Power: To make known to the Sons of Men His mighty Acts, and the glorious Majeſty of His Kingdom.
PSALM CXLV.

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ONE or two whole Paragraphs, and the Parts of ſeveral others, omitted in delivering the enſuing Diſcourſe, for want of Time, are inſerted in this Publication in their proper Places, without any Mark of Diſtinction.

BRITISH MUSEUM

The INTRODUCTION.

MY BRETHREN,

THAT part of God's holy word, upon which my Diſcourſe at this time will be grounded, is in the XVth Chapter of the Revelation of St. *John*, the 3d and 4th Verſes.

---GREAT and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints! WHO ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name! for thou only art holy: For all nations ſhall come and worſhip before thee; for thy judgments are made manifeſt.

THE uncommon and alarming occurrences of divine providence, which we have experienced in the late EARTHQUAKES, ſeem to demand a very particular and uncommon notice. And altho' I have not, till now, invited you into the houſe of God, for that purpoſe; yet you, *My Brethren* of this ſociety, are my witneſſes, that I have not let theſe providential viſitations paſs wholly unregarded

unregarded hitherto; but, more than once, taken occaſion to ſpeak of them; and improved them as an argument to inforce that practical religion and holineſs of life, which is doubtleſs the moral end and deſign of them. So that many things which might have properly been ſaid upon the occaſion, have already been ſaid in this place: Which muſt be my apology with thoſe who may not hear, in this diſcourſe, ſome things which they might, perhaps, expect in it. For I am not fond of repetitions, eſpecially upon a ſubject which ſuggeſts ſuch a great variety of reflections, as renders it quite needleſs to uſe any; and in diſcourſing upon which, it is, indeed, much more difficult to contract and ſuppreſs, than it is to enlarge.

And now we are aſſembled together, out of the common, ſtated courſe, to contemplate, and religiouſly to improve, theſe mighty and wonderful works of God, I know of no paſſage of ſcripture, fitter for the baſis of a diſcourſe upon ſuch an occaſion, than that which was juſt now read to you. This will naturally lead us from particular inſtances and manifeſtations of God's power, to a more enlarged contemplation of his mighty deeds; and the glory and majeſty of that kingdom, which "ruleth over all."

There is ſuch an elevation and dignity, ſuch a divine energy and pathos, in this paſſage of ſcripture, as can hardly fail to raiſe and fix the attention of every one. However, if any thing farther ſhould be neceſſary to this end, it will be found in the great occaſion upon which, the glorious place where, and the bleſſed

bleſſed Ones by whom, the words are ſuppoſed to have been originally uttered. I ſhall, therefore, juſt remind you of theſe things, before I proceed to a particular conſideration of the paſſage itſelf.

St. *John* the Divine, being in the Spirit, and rapt in the viſions of God into future times, had a repreſentation made to him of the woes and plagues, and the final deſtruction, which were to come upon thoſe of the grand apoſtacy from the pure faith and worſhip of the Goſpel; upon that antichriſtian power which is emblematically deſcribed by "a woman arayed in "purple, and ſcarlet colour, and decked with gold, "and precious ſtones and pearls;" — and having "upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, "AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." [a] The plagues which St. *John* in his viſion, or rather viſions, ſaw coming upon great Babylon, (whatever is intended hereby) were ſucceſſive; and ariſing one above another in greatneſs and terror, till at length "there "were voices, and thunders and lightnings," as he expreſſes it; and "a great Earthquake, ſuch "a one as was not ſince men were upon the earth, ſo "mighty an Earthquake and ſo great. And the great "city was divided into three parts; and the cities of "the nations fell;" [i. e. of the nations which had "drank of the wine of the wrath of her fornication," chap. XIV. ver. 8.] "and great Babylon came in "remembrance before God, to give unto her the "cup of the wine of the fierceneſs of his wrath." [b]

It

[a] Rev. 17. 4, 5. [b] Chap. XVI. ver. 18, 19.

It ſeems to have been at this dividing of the great city into three parts by an Earthquake, attended, or immediately followed by a mighty fire; and not at her final overthrow, that St. *John* ſaw the "kings of "the earth who had committed fornication with her;" the "merchants who were made rich by her;" and "every ſhip-maſter, and all the company in ſhips,"— "ſtanding afar off, for fear of her torment, weeping "and wailing, and ſaying, Alas! alas! that great "city"— for in one hour ſo great riches is come to "nought"!—and "crying when they ſaw the ſmoke "of her burning, ſaying, What city is like unto this "great city! And they caſt duſt upon their heads, "weeping and wailing, and ſaying, Alas! alas! that "great city, wherein were made rich all that had "ſhips in the ſea— Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and "ye holy apoſtles and prophets; for God hath aven-"ged you on her!" [a] I ſay, it ſeems not to be her final deſtruction, at which theſe lamentations of ſome, and exultations of others, are made; that being to be effected by another, and ſtill greater earthquake. And this her utter ruin was accordingly repreſented to St. *John* immediately after, by the following expreſſive emblem. "And a mighty angel," ſays he, "took a ſtone like "a great mill-ſtone, and caſt it into the ſea, ſaying, "THUS, with violence, ſhall that great city Ba-"bylon be thrown down, and ſhall be FOUND NO "MORE AT ALL. And the voice of harpers and "muſicians, and of pipers, and of trumpeters, ſhall "be

[a] Chap. XVIII. ver 3, 15—20.

" be heard no more at all in thee—and the light of " a candle ſhall ſhine no more at all in thee; and " the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride ſhall " be heard no more at all in thee: for thy mer- " chants were the great men of the earth; for by " thy ſorceries were all nations deceived." [a] This is plainly her final overthrow and deſtruction. But who, or what is meant by *Babylon* the great, the woman arayed in purple and ſcarlet, and ſtyled the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth; who or what, I ſay, is intended hereby, I ſhall leave every one to conjecture; only juſt obſerving, that St. *John* tells us, ſhe ſitteth on " ſeven hills;" that ſhe " reign- " eth over the kings of the earth;" and that " in " her was found the blood of prophets, and of ſaints, " and of all that were ſlain upon the earth."

Now it is to be obſerved, that when St. *John* ſaw the " ſeven angels having the ſeven laſt plagues [b]" to pour out upon the earth, and particularly upon Babylon, he had alſo a viſion of that glorious region where thoſe were, " that had gotten the victory over " the beaſt, and over his image, and over his mark, " and over the number of his name—having the harps " of GOD." [c] And thoſe bleſſed and happy perſons it was, that he heard " ſinging this ſong of MOSES " the ſervant of GOD, and the ſong of the LAMB, " ſaying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord " GOD Almighty!" &c.

[a] Ver. 21, 22, 23. [b] Chap. XV. ver. 1. [c] Ver. 2.

This is the anthem of the bleſſed, in thoſe glorious manſions, with reference to the great events of which St. *John* ſpeaks; while they anticipate the final overthrow of that power which "exalts itſelf "above all that is called God, and that is worſhipped." And theſe circumſtances being taken into conſideration, they cannot but give an additional ſolemnity and dignity to this paſſage of ſcripture, in which there is ſuch a native ſublimity and grandeur, as cannot but ſtrike, warm, and elevate the minds of all, except the groſly abandoned, or naturally-ſtupid.

To imagine that we, poor ſojourners on earth, and inhabitants of clay, can, with a proper ardor, and an equally elevated devotion, bear a part in this ſong of praiſe and triumph, were, indeed, great vanity and preſumption: But yet, not ſo much as to liſten to it, and try to join the chorus, were certainly unbecoming our profeſſion and character as chriſtians: For by becoming truly ſuch, we claim a kindred with the bleſſed above; and are, in a ſort, of one ſociety with them; being the adopted children of Him, of whom the "whole "family in heaven and earth is named." In the ſtrong and emphatical language of ſcripture, we are not only "fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the "houſhold of God", here on earth; but we are "come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the "living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem":——— "and to the general aſſembly and church of the "firſt-born which are written in heaven"; and not only "to the ſpirits of juſt men made per-

"made

"feet", but "to an innumerable company of "angels"; and not only to an innumerable company of angels, but "to Jeſus the Mediator of the "new covenant"; and not only to Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant, but "to God the Judge of "all". [a] If we are truly the diſciples of Chriſt, we are now united by faith, by love, temper and affection, not only with ſaints, angels, and arch-angels above, but with our glorified Redeemer; and God himſelf dwelleth in us, and we in God [b].

LET us, therefore, bearing in mind the honourable kindred, and glorious relation, which we boaſt to the inhabitants of Sion that is above, "draw near with a true "heart, in full aſſurance of faith"; even as "ſeeing "him who is inviſible"; and in his immutable veracity beholding and anticipating the great events repreſented in theſe viſions of St. *John*; Let us, I ſay, now draw near in full aſſurance of faith, ſaying, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God "almighty! juſt and true are thy ways, thou King "of ſaints! Who ſhall not fear thee, and glorify thy "name! for thou only art holy: For all nations "ſhall come and worſhip before thee; for thy judg-"ments are made manifeſt!"

HOWEVER, it is not my deſign at preſent, to conſider theſe words with a particular view to the original deſign of them, as they are found in the viſions of St. *John*: Had this been my intention, I ſhould have been more exact and critical in pointing out to

[a] Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. [b] 1 Joh. 4. 15.

you the order and ſeries, and the diſtinct parts of theſe viſions; which is now needleſs: Becauſe I intend to conſider the paſſage as if it were independent, having no connection with any thing preceeding or following. And being taken in this light, it will, I ſuppoſe, naturally enough lead us to ſuch contemplations upon God, his works and attributes; and to ſuch practical reflections as will perfectly coincide with the preſent occaſion, and our deſign in coming to worſhip and bow down before the Lord our Maker at this time. For it naturally leads us, in the

FIRST place, to conſider the greatneſs of God's works; which proclaim his omnipotence. And

SECONDLY, their wonderfulneſs, and inſcrutability.——Which two particulars are obviouſly ſuggeſted by the former part of the paſſage: "*Great* "and *marvellous* are thy works, Lord God *Almighty!*"

THIRDLY, the moral perfections of God, in the exerciſe of which he governs the univerſe—"*Juſt* and *true* are thy ways, thou *King of Saints*—"thou only art *holy*—thy *judgments* are made ma-"nifeſt".

FOURTHLY, The obligations lying upon all men to fear, glorify, and worſhip him—"Who ſhall "not *fear* thee, O Lord, and *glorify* thy name—"all nations ſhall come and *worſhip* before thee."

And,

LASTLY, It will lead us to ſome practical reflections upon thoſe great and marvellous works of God,

God, to make a religious improvement of which, we are now aſſembled together.

I SHALL be the ſhorter in the ſpeculative, doctrinal part of my diſcourſe, that I may have the more time for what I imagine will be more uſeful; I mean, the practical. And as I would hope there are none preſent, but what are preſent with a good intention, I ſhould be ſorry if any of my hearers ſhould go away without being the better for what they hear. Accordingly, tho' I will endeavour to remember that men have heads, as well as hearts and conſciences; yet I ſhall aim rather at ſpeakingto the latter, than to the former.

PART I.

Of the Greatneſs of God's Works.

LET us then, in the firſt place, conſider the greatneſs of God's works; which proclaim his omnipotence. "*Great*—are thy works, Lord God *Almighty!*"—It is to be obſerved, that there are no powers in what we commonly call natural, ſecondary cauſes, but what are, to ſay the leaſt, originally derived from the firſt; and no real agency in any that are wholly material. Activity or agency, properly ſpeaking, belongs only to mind or ſpirit; and all thoſe powers and operations which in common language are aſcribed to natural bodies, are really effects and operations of the ſupreme, original cauſe.

So

So that all the works which we behold, are, ſtrictly ſpeaking, God's works; excepting thoſe which are wrought by men, and other finite, intelligent beings. And even theſe latter are, in one ſenſe, God's works; becauſe, though human agency, and the agency of other ſubordinate intelligences, is not to be wholly excluded and ſet aſide; yet the active powers of theſe beings are both derived from, and upheld by Him, to whom "power" emphatically "belongeth" [a]: And alſo becauſe all theſe ſubordinate agents, in all their operations, are under the controul and dominion of the Almighty; and employed by Him to fulfil his purpoſes and pleaſure. So that all the works which we behold are, in a large ſenſe, and in the language of ſcripture, the doings and works of God. And accordingly the works of God, in the ſcripture phraſeology, comprehend thoſe of creation, of nature and providence; and whatever God does as the Lord and Governor of the world, whoſe kingdom ruleth over all.

And now, how manifold, and how great are theſe works! Whether we turn our eyes to the great and wide ſea, or to the dry land; to the earth beneath us, or to the heavens above us, ſtill we behold the mighty works of God. The ocean, which is ſhut up within limits which it cannot tranſgreſs, but when God gives it a diſpenſation for ſo doing; and wherein are things "innumerable both ſmall and great beaſts;" this is, ſurely, a great and aſtoniſhing work. And how mighty and

[a] Pſalm lxii. 11.

and powerful is that Being who made, and who has fixed bounds to it, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, "and no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be "stayed?" that Being, who holds the waters of it in the "hollow of his hand;" and whom its winds and surges obey? that Being, upon whom all its numerous inhabitants wait, that he may "give them "their meat in due season;" which are troubled when he only "hideth his face," and die when he "taketh their breath?"

THE dry land is not less full of his great works and wonders. Consider the beasts of the forests, and the cattle upon a thousand hills: Consider the huge, bulky animals, and the places where they range; the wide extended plains, and the "everlasting moun-"tains" with their summits above the clouds; the mighty volcanos in different parts of the world, whence rivers of liquid fire flow for miles into the ocean, like those of water from other mountains, as though they were going to contend for that place which God "founded" for the other element: Consider the concussion of an Earthquake, when half a continent with its neighbouring islands, and their surrounding seas, are at once shaken; as though the land and water which God once separated, were again to be mixed and confounded together: Consider these works of God, I say, and tell me if they are not great!

CONSIDER next, the air and atmosphere with which the whole earth is surrounded, and in which it is in-

folded

folded as in a garment: Conſider the numerous people, the winged inhabitants thereof, the fowls of heaven, which God daily feeds; and heareth when they cry [a] unto him, though we underſtand not their language: Conſider the whirlwind and the tempeſt, when God "bows the heavens, and comes down, "and darkneſs is under his feet;" when he "rides "upon a cherub and does fly," yea when he "flies "upon the wings of the wind;" when he "makes "darkneſs his ſecret place, his pavilion round about "him, where dark waters are, and thick clouds of "the ſkies"; when again, "at the brightneſs that is "before him, his thick clouds paſs, hail-ſtones and "coals of fire;" when the Lord alſo "thunders, "and the Higheſt gives his voice:"—yea, when he "ſends out his arrows, and ſcatters the [guilty, af-"frighted] nations; and ſhoots out his lightnings and "diſcomfits them:" [b] Conſider the returns of day and night, when we are alternately enlivened and cheered by the light, and covered with gloom and and darkneſs: Conſider the annually-returning ſeaſons, when God alternately reneweth the face of the earth, and binds the fields and rivers in icy bands: Conſider theſe works of God, I ſay, and then pronounce, whether they are great or not! "But lo, "theſe are [but] parts of his ways; and how little a "portion is heard of him!" [c]

AND

a Job xxxviii. 41. and Pſalm cxlviii. 9. [b] Pſalm xviii. 9—15. This paſſage of ſcripture ſeems plainly to refer to the plagues of Egypt, and to what happened at the Red Sea.

[c] Job xxvi. 14.

AND if theſe works of God, which have now been hinted at, are great, and proclaim an all-powerful Being; what do thoſe innumerable worlds do, which we behold revolving about us in ſuch an admirable order! Who made thoſe two great lights, the one of which rules by day, and the other by night? Who made the ſtars alſo? Who, thoſe numerous, immenſe globes, compared to ſome of which, our earth is but as an atom, and our ocean as a drop of the bucket? Whoſe breath gave them all being? Whoſe hand gives them their motions? Who directs their courſes? Who makes them know their proper places and diſtances, ſo as not to joſtle, and wrack world on world? Whoſe hand conſtantly maintains their order, and ſuſtains them in being? When you conſider theſe things, ſurely you cannot avoid exclaiming,— "Great—— "are thy works, Lord God Almighty!" "For [ve- "rily] the inviſible things of him from the creation "of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by "the things that are made, even his eternal power "and Godhead." [a]

BUT the works of God may come under another, and a mixed conſideration, if I may ſo expreſs it; I mean, as they are the doings of Him who is the righteous [b] Sovereign of the world, as well as the Crea-

C tor

[a] Rom. i. 20.

[b] The reader is deſired to obſerve, that though God's moral perfections and government, properly come under the THIRD head of diſcourſe propoſed; yet it is in this mixed, complex ſenſe, that his works are ſpoken of as "great and marvellous," in

tor of it, and the Lord of nature. In which reſpect they are alſo great and illuſtrious; and equally ſo, perhaps, whether we conſider the works of God's righteous ſeverity, or his works of mercy and goodneſs.

God's works of judgment, which have been abroad, and made manifeſt in the earth, from one generation to another, may juſtly be termed great. Was not that, one ſuch work, for example, when God rained fire and brimſtone out of heaven, and conſumed thoſe wicked cities, Sodom and Gomorrha; and when the ground on which they ſtood, was ſunk, doubtleſs by an earthquake, to a ſtanding nauſeous pool, as at this day? Was not that another ſuch work, when he ſent his Angel, and by him, deſtroyed in one night, ſuch a vaſt multitude in the Aſſyrian camp? Was not that another, when he deſtroyed *Pharaoh* and his mighty hoſt in the red ſea?—that ſame *Pharaoh*, whom he "raiſed up, for to ſhew in him his power, and that "his name might be declared throughout all the "earth?" [a] How many mighty works, of a ſimilar nature to theſe, has God wrought? and what deſolation has he made in the earth, in a way of judgment, ſince the foundations thereof were laid by him! But

in the text. The words have plainly reſpect to the acts and doings of God, conſidered in a twofold light; as he is the Lord of univerſal nature, and the juſt Ruler and Judge of Men. Upon which account it was thought proper to conſider their greatneſs in this light, by way of anticipation, before the morality of the divine government comes, in courſe, to be diſtinctly ſpoken of.

[a] Exod ix. 16.

But how great, more eſpecially, was that work of God, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up? when the waters aroſe above the tops of the talleſt mountains, and the flood of his anger came "upon the world of the ungodly, and ſwept "them all away!"

But God's works of goodneſs and kindneſs are not leſs great and illuſtrious, from age to age, than thoſe of his juſt ſeverity. The preſervation of *Lot*, whoſe righteous ſoul was grieved with the filthy converſation of the wicked; and the preſervation of *Noah*, a preacher of righteouſneſs, with his family, in the ark, from whom the depopulated world was re-peopled after the deluge; theſe, I ſay, were great works of kindneſs and mercy. And was not that another ſuch, when he led his choſen people like a flock out of Egypt, directing their march by a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night; till, at his command, the ſea retired, and roſe as a wall on either ſide of them, to let them paſs? Was not that another work of great kindneſs to his choſen people, though attended with terror to them, when he gave them his laws and ſtatutes at Sinai? when the mountain trembled and quaked; "and all the people ſaw the thunderings, and "the lightnings, and the noiſe of the trumpet, and "the mountain ſmoaking; and—removed, and ſtood "afar off?" [a] But to ariſe ſtill higher; if the giving of the law by *Moſes* his ſervant, and by the miniſtration

[a] Exod. xx. 18.

ſtration of angels, was a great work of God's kindneſs; how much greater is that of his giving the goſpel of peace to the world, by his Son JESUS CHRIST, who is "made ſo much better than the angels, as he "hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent "name than they"? Is not the redemption of this ſinful, apoſtate world, the work of God? or is it not emphatically a great one? Without controverſy, great is this work of God, this myſtery of godlineſs, which angels deſire to look into! and at which not only hell, but heaven itſelf, and all that is therein, ſtands aſtoniſhed, excepting HIM whoſe work it is; and whom "the heaven, and the heavens of heavens cannot contain"!

THERE are other great things, both in the way of judgment and of mercy to be accompliſhed upon this ſtage, before the ſcene is cloſed. We have, perhaps, not ſeen as yet half the acts of this mighty drama. But we know the principal contents, and chief heads of the whole, by reflecting upon what is actually paſt, and looking into that "ſure word of prophecy" which ſhines as a light in a dark place, until the ſeveral great days and periods dawn in ſucceſſion, and the "day-ſtar [at length] ariſes in our hearts". The chief articles and circumſtances of the plot, if I may ſo expreſs it, and the winding up of the whole, are in general made known to us by revelation. Babylon the great ſhall be utterly deſtroyed; which, ſurely, will appear to be a great work, whenever it is accompliſhed. God hath not utterly and finally caſt away his

his ancient people Iſrael; they ſhall be recalled from their ſeveral and wide diſperſions: And this work, which God will ſurely effect by his power and providence, will be equally great. It was not ſaid in vain, "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance; "and the UTTERMOST PARTS of the earth for thy "poſſeſſion"; but when all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved, the FULNESS of the gentiles ſhall alſo come in; and there ſhall be "one fold and one ſhepherd"; and "every "tongue ſhall confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to "the glory of GOD, the FATHER.

BUT how great, beyond expreſſion, beyond conception, will the concluſion of this drama of ages be! When all the numerous actors ſhall appear before the viſible Repreſentative and "Image of the inviſible "God [a]", to receive his life-giving plaudit, or to be hiſs'd and frown'd into perdition! When thoſe who have acted their part ill, ſhall mix their cries and wailings in horrid diſcord, with the triumphant ſongs [b] and hoſanna's of the redeemed, who have acted well; with the voice of the arch-angel and with the trump of God! When the ſcenes, the ſtage, and the mighty theatre itſelf, ſhall all drop and fall together!—I leave it to you to judge, whether theſe works of God will be great, or little!

To me it appears, that whether we contemplate the works of God in the natural, or in the moral world;

[a] Col. i. 15.

[b] The Author thinks, but is not certain, that there is ſome-where in Dr. *Scott*'s works a paſſage, to which this part of the ſentence may ſeem to be at leaſt an alluſion.

world; or at once view them in that twofold light, in which I have now been conſidering them; whether we reflect upon thoſe of them which are already accompliſhed, or look forward to thoſe which ſhall infallibly be accompliſhed hereafter; ſtill we cannot but exclaim— "Great—are thy works Lord God "Almighty!" Nor will I leſſen and debaſe theſe works of God, even ſo much as to aſk, What compariſon there is betwixt them, and the moſt auguſt of thoſe which are done by men, by the kings and potentates of the earth; to which trifles we ſometimes aſcribe grandeur and dignity!

PART II.

Of the marvellous, unſearchable nature of God's Works.

IT is now time for us to conſider the wonderful nature of God's works: For they are not only great, but marvellous!—"*Marvellous* are thy works, "Lord God almighty!"—They may, indeed, be ſaid to be marvellous, only in reſpect of their greatneſs; ſince no contemplative man can avoid being aſtoniſhed at them, conſidered merely in this view. But they are alſo marvellous in another reſpect; viz. as we cannot penetrate into, or fully comprehend them, by reaſon of the narrowneſs of our capacities [a]. We can

[a] A little reflection upon the operations of our own minds, will indeed make it evident, that all wonder, ſurpriſe, aſtoniſhment, at

can form no adequate, I had almoſt ſaid abſolutely, no conception at all, of creation, the firſt and original work of God. And it is but a little way that we can ſee into the nature and cauſes and reaſons of things; the means and methods and ends, by and for which, many events are bro't about both in the natural and moral world. As none can by ſearching "find "out the Almighty unto perfection"; ſo neither can any perfectly underſtand and comprehend his works, even the leaſt of them; and much leſs the greateſt. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are "your ways, my ways, ſaith the Lord. For as the "heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my ways "higher than your ways, and my tho'ts than your "thoughts" [b]. I know there are not wanting men, who pretend to have a thorough underſtanding of theſe matters; of almoſt all the works of nature and providence. But whether they are to be accounted wiſe men, or fools who know nothing as they ought to know it, we may learn in part from *Solomon*'s reflections upon this head: "I ſaid I will be wiſe, but "it was far from me," ſays he. "That which is far off,"

at bottom proceed from, and connote ignorance; for nothing which we fully underſtand, ever excites our wonder or admiration. And it is certain that no ſuch paſſion can have any place in a perfect, all comprehending mind. So that God's works are marvellous, only with relation to his imperfect creatures: And the more imperfect and ſhort-ſighted creatures are, the more marvellous muſt theſe works appear to them; I mean, if they at all think of them.

[b] Iſai. lv. 8, 9.

" off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?
" I applied mine heart to know and to ſearch, and
" to ſeek out wiſdom, and the reaſon of things "[a]—
" When I applied mine heart to know wiſdom, and
" to ſee the buſineſs that is done upon the earth—
" then I beheld all the work of God, that a man
" cannot find out the work that is done under the
" ſun: becauſe though a man labour to ſeek it out,
" yet he ſhall not find it; yea farther, though a wiſe
" man think to know it, yet ſhall he not be able to
" find it."[b] If a wiſe man cannot find out the work of God, it would be ſtrange if fools could; nor, indeed, is there any greater evidence of folly, than the pretence of having done it. There is a reflection of much the ſame nature with this of *Solomon*, in the book of *Job*: " Which doeth great things, paſt find-
" ing out, yea, and wonders without number."[c]—
" He is wiſe in heart, and mighty in ſtrength—which
" removeth the mountains, and they know not;
" which overturneth them in his anger: which ſha-
" keth the earth out of her place, and the pillars of
" heaven tremble: which commandeth the ſun, and
" it riſeth not; and ſealeth up the ſtars: which alone
" ſpreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the
" waves of the ſea: which maketh Arcturus, Orion,
" and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the ſouth."[d]

THERE is, indeed, ſuch a thing as natural philoſophy, which is of great uſe both to the purpoſes of life and

[a] Eccleſ. vii. 23, 24, 25. [b] Chap. viii. ver. 16, 17. [c] Job ix. 10. [d] Ver. 4,—9.

and godlineſs; and which, therefore, well deſerves to be cultivated. However, the whole of what goes by that name, ſeems to be no more than the obſerving of facts, their ſucceſſion and order; and reducing them to a general analogy; to certain eſtabliſhed rules, and a ſettled courſe and ſeries of events; called the laws of nature, from their ſteadineſs and conſtancy. This, I ſay, ſeems to comprehend the whole of what we uſually call natural philoſophy. But after all the improvements that have been made herein, how many things are there in the natural world, which never have been, and perhaps never will be, reduced to any ſuch general analogy, or to the common known laws of nature? How many phænomina are there, which we may call the *irregulars*, the *anomalies*, and *heteroclites* in the grammar, in the great book and language of nature, by which God ſpeaks to us as really, as by his written oracles? Were the laws of comets, of inundations, of earthquakes, of meteors, of tempeſts, of the aurora borealies, of monſtrous births? were the particular laws and cauſes of theſe, and of a thouſand other phænomena, I ſay, ever plainly diſcovered? I mean, ſo that they could be methodically calculated, foretold, and accounted for, as we calculate, foretel and account for common tides, eclipſes, &c? No, ſurely; this has never been done by the greateſt philoſophers, with any tolerable degree of certainty and preciſion; tho' there have been very ingenious, and even probable hypotheſis concerning ſome of theſe phænomena. However, their

cauſes and laws ſtill remain very much in the dark: which may be owing, in part, to our not having critically obſerved a ſufficient number of facts in each kind, from whence to draw general concluſions, and on which to form theories. For there is doubtleſs as regular an order and connexion of theſe facts and effects, in nature, whether actually ſeen and known by us or not; and therefore as truly a courſe of nature with reſpect to them, as there is of, and with reſpect to, the moſt common and familiar. But this connexion and order is, as yet, too recondite and hidden for human penetration; ſo that we can do but little more than form conjectures about theſe things. Theſe works of God may, therefore, juſtly be called marvellous, paſt finding out; and theſe wonders of nature are alſo without number.

But upon ſuppoſition that all thoſe works of God, which we call the works of nature, could be brought to a common analogy, and methodicaly arranged under certain known laws, as ſome of them are, ſo as to admit of a ſolution as plainly, and in the ſame ſenſe, that eclipſes, common tides, or any other natural phænomena do; even upon this ſuppoſition, I ſay, our knowledge would ſtill be very imperfect; and the works of God, ſtill marvellous to us. For it is to be remembered, that theſe general laws, by which we think to account for all other things, are themſelves myſterious and inexplicable. Who, for example, can, without vanity and preſumption, pretend to underſtand the great law of gravitation; the moſt general

general and extenſive one, which we know of in nature? Who, I ſay, can, without the utmoſt vanity and preſumption pretend to a thorough underſtanding of this law? eſpecially after a NEWTON has confeſſed his ignorance of it; and expreſſed his doubts, whether it were the effect of God's immediate power, operating regularly upon every particle of matter throughout the univerſe; or whether it were the effect of ſome intermediate, natural cauſe, unknown to us? ſome ſubtle medium pervading all natural bodies and ſubſtances? And though the latter were known to be the caſe, ſtill the ſame, or rather a greater difficulty would recur, reſpecting that prior, and higher natural cauſe; and ſo on *in infinitum*; or, at leaſt, 'till we come to that great Firſt Cauſe and Agent, who is the "leaſt underſtood" of all things. For He muſt needs be more incomprehenſible even than any of his marvellous works, ſince our firſt knowledge of Him, is learnt from them.

WHAT is ſaid above concerning the law of gravitation, is equally applicable to all others, which we call natural cauſes, or laws of nature: They are all really incomprehenſible. We can no more penetrate into the true reaſon why a ſpark of fire, rather than a drop of water, ſhould cauſe an exploſion when dropped on powder; than we can tell why a ſtone, left to itſelf in the air, ſhould fall, rather than aſcend: i. e. we cannot do it at all. Thus it is as to all natural cauſes in general. So that, as was intimated

mated above, our knowledge would be very imperfect, even though we could eaſily reduce all the phænomena in the natural world, to known, general laws; as it is certain we cannot. We ſhould then know nothing but facts and effects, their regular ſucceſſion and order. For though we ſpeak of the natural, viſible cauſes of many things; yet theſe cauſes ſeem to be plainly effects themſelves; and the *real* cauſe of them, and of all things, is hidden, quite veiled from mortal ſight; "though He be not far from "every one of us." [a] "Behold, we go forward, but "He is not [viſibly] there; and backward, but we "cannot perceive Him: On the left hand, where "He doth work, but we cannot behold Him: He "hideth Himſelf on the right hand, that we cannot "ſee Him. But He knoweth the way that we "take!" [b]

THAT cauſe which acts thus regularly, mightily, and marvellouſly, every-where; muſt needs be all-wiſe, all-powerful, and omnipreſent: And into His incomprehenſible agency, non-pluſs'd philoſophy itſelf muſt ultimately reſolve all natural effects, together with their apparent, viſible cauſes.

So that the whole natural world, is really nothing but one great wonder and myſtery. It is not only thoſe which we, in common language, call the great works of God, that are marvellous and inſcrutable; but the leaſt of them alſo. We are even an aſtoniſhment to ourſelves. For we are "fearfully "and

[a] Acts xvii. 27. [b] Job xxiii. 8, 9, 10.

" and wonderfully made: Marvellous are thy works,
" and that my ſoul knoweth right well! My ſub-
" ſtance was not hid from thee, when I was made in
" ſecret, and curiouſly wrought—Thine eye did ſee
" my ſubſtance yet being unperfect, and in thy book
" all my members were written, which in continu-
" ance were faſhioned!—[a]" The moſt common, the leaſt, and the moſt inconſiderable effects of God's power, which we behold, baffle human wiſdom and penetration. A flower of the field, which ſprings up in the morning, and at night is withered; the mite that is undiſcernable to the naked eye; every atom or mote that flies in the ſun-beams, or is wafted by the breeze, contains marvells and wonders enough to non-pluſs the greateſt ſage. Theſe are all the works of God; and all marvellous: And tho' we do not call them great; yet the leaſt of them proclaims the wiſdom, the eternal power and god-head, of the Creator.

THE works of God, as he is the moral [b] Governor of the world, are alſo marvellous and unſearchable; at leaſt many of them are ſo. The *ſecond*, or the new birth, which is of the Spirit, and which we are all ſo much concerned to experience, is not leſs myſterious than the *firſt*. For " as thou knoweſt not what
" is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do
" grow in the womb of her that is with child; even
" ſo thou knoweſt not the works of God who maketh all;"

[a] Pſalm cxxxix. 14, 15, 16. [b] See the marginal note, P. 17.

" all"[a]; and by whom we are " created a-new in " Chriſt Jeſus". And altho' our Saviour cautioned *Nichodemus* not to " marvell" at his ſaying, " Ye " muſt be born again"; yet he immediately compares this myſterious work of the Spirit, to one of the viſible effects of God's inviſible power in the natural world; which tho' one of the moſt common, is yet truly wonderful— " The wind bloweth where it " liſteth, ſays he, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, " but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither " it goeth: ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit";[b] of that Spirit, which is ever operating both in the kingdom of nature, and of grace. For we may apply to all theſe operations and effects, however different they may ſeem, what the apoſtle ſays of the different kinds of miraculous gifts in that age of the church— " All theſe worketh that one and the ſelf-ſame " ſpirit".[c]

THE diſpenſations of God's providence towards mankind, have all ſome-what that is myſterious and incomprehenſible in them. We cannot ſee into all the connections and dependences of things and events in the moral world; ſo as to give a clear account and ſolution of them. Difficulties and objections will remain, thro' our ignorance and ſhort-ſightedneſs, againſt the ſcheme and methods of God's dealing with the children of men, after puzzled theology has done its beſt. In which reſpect it is ſaid, that " clouds and " darkneſs

[a] Eccleſ. xi. 5. [b] John iii. 7, 8. [c] 1 Cor. xii. 11.

" darkneſs are round about Him", altho' " righteouſ-
" neſs and judgment are the habitation of his throne"[a]. Amongſt the marvellous, unſearchable diſpenſations of God to the world, conſidered as the moral Governor of it; we may particularly reckon our being ſubjected to ſorrow, pain and death, " through the of-
" fence of one;" and our reſtoration to happineſs and life eternal, by the obedience unto death of a far Greater, " the Lord from heaven:" God's calling the Jews of old to be his peculiar people; their rejection, with the circumſtances attending it; and their preſervation in their preſent diſperſed ſtate: The ſufferings to which good men are ſometimes ſubjected, while the wicked are proſpered, and " flouriſh like a
" green bay-tree:" The utter overthrow and ruin of ſome wicked nations, while ſome others, to appearance as wicked, if not more ſo, are preſerved, and favoured with the ſmiles of providence. Theſe and many other diſpenſations of providence, both paſt and future, we cannot penetrate to the bottom of, or clearly ſee into. So that whether we conſider God's natural works, or his moral; or conſider his works at once in both theſe lights, they are not only great, but marvellous. " No heart can think of
" theſe things worthily: and who is able to conceive
" his ways? It is a tempeſt which no man can ſee;
" for the moſt part of his works are hid. Who can
" declare the works of his juſtice? or who can en-
" dure them? for his covenant is afar off, and the
" trial

[a] Pſalm xcvii. 2.

" trial of all things is in the end." [a] Whether, therefore, you are a true philoſopher, a true chriſtian, or both, as St. *Paul* was, ſtill you muſt adopt his language?—" O the depth of the riches, both of the " wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearcha- " ble are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out! " For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or " who hath been his counſellor? Or who hath firſt " given unto him, and it ſhall be recompenced to " him again? For of him, and through him, and to " him are all things: To whom be glory for ever " Amen!" [b]

PART III.

Of the moral Perfections and Government of God.

BUT though human wiſdom cannot ſcan or comprehend the great and marvellous works of God; yet we do, or may know ſo much, both of Him and them, as may ſerve the ends of practical religion; which is the end of man.—So that though we ſhould guard againſt vanity on one hand, yet we ſhould equally guard againſt falſe modeſty, or ſcepticiſm on the other. We are not ſhut up in a vaſt, dark labyrinth, without any crevice or clue at all. We ſee at leaſt ſome glimmerings of light; and if *Theſeus*-like, we follow the clue which is actually given

[a] Eccleſ. xvi. 20, 21, 22. [b] Rom. xi. 33—36.

given us, it will lead us out of this darkneſs into open and endleſs day. But not to dwell upon metaphor and alluſion: God gives us ſuch notices of himſelf by his works, by the courſe of his providence, by our reaſon, and by his word, that though we muſt confeſs our ignorance of innumerable things, ſtill we may ſay with confidence—"Juſt and true are thy "ways, thou King of ſaints!"—"Thou only art "holy!"—"Thy judgments are made manifeſt!"

AMIDST all our darkneſs and ignorance, we ſee enough, unleſs we are wilfully blind, to convince us, That God is a moral Governor; or that a moral government is actually eſtabliſhed, and gradually carrying on in the world; and that we ourſelves are the ſubjects of it. Had we only the light of nature to direct us, we might by properly following it, conclude with a good degree of certainty, That God is a beneficent, true, and righteous being; the patron of good men, and the enemy of the wicked; and one who will, ſooner or later, give to every man according to his deeds. For is not the Creator, and Upholder, alſo the Lord and Judge, of all? Or "ſhall not "the Judge of all the earth do right!"—"The "work of a man ſhall he render unto him, and cauſe "every man to find according to his ways. Yea, "ſurely, God will not do wickedly, neither will "the Almighty pervert judgment! Who hath given "him a charge over the earth? or who hath diſpo-"ſed the whole world!" Though theſe words are

found in one of the books of revelation, yet the paſſage is really the language of nature: Nor, indeed, do I remember that any have ſuppoſed that *Elihu* who utters them, was inſpired. Theſe are the ſentiments which naturally ariſe in an improved, virtuous mind, upon contemplating the works of God; the great, independent Being, and ſource of all things.

THE moral perfections which we uſually aſcribe to God, ſeem to have a connexion with thoſe natural ones, which muſt neceſſarily belong to the original cauſe of all things; particularly with independency, or ſelf-ſufficiency, infinite wiſdom, and unbounded power. It is ſcarce, if at all poſſible, to conceive of that Being who has theſe natural perfections, to be falſe, cruel, or unjuſt; or to be otherwiſe than faithful and true, holy and righteous. So that theſe latter attributes are, in ſome ſenſe, deducible from the former. But this argument, uſually called by metaphyſicians, the argument *a priori*; this argument, I ſay, in conjunction with ſome others, will appear concluſive to every thoughtful and honeſt man: I mean, particularly, thoſe arguments which may be drawn from the moral nature which God has given us; from the conſciouſneſs we have of right and wrong; from the law written in our hearts; from our immediate ſenſe of good and of ill deſert; and from the veſtiges and traces of goodneſs and righteouſneſs, which we plainly ſee in the conſtitution, and in the courſe of nature; and the diſpenſations of God's providence

dence towards men. For although the judgments [a] of God are not now made manifeſt in ſo great a degree as they will be at that period, to which the paſſage my diſcourſe is grounded upon, relates; yet they are diſcoverable in ſome degree at preſent, by what we daily ſee and experience. Although there may be room left for men of perverſe and corrupt minds to cavil againſt, there is really none for men of fair, ingenuous minds to doubt of, much leſs to deny, the morality of the government we are now under, the things which have been juſt hinted at above, and for a particular diſcuſſion of which, there is not time, being duly conſidered.

[a] By the *judgments* of God, if I miſtake not, people generally, indeed almoſt always, intend the manifeſtations of God's diſpleaſure in the afflictive diſpenſations of his providence. But in the language of ſcripture, by that phraſe is often meant the ſtatutes, ordinances and commandments of God; but more generally, I think, the *judicial acts* of God in the courſe of his providence, as he is the moral Governor of the world, in ſuch a large ſenſe as equally to comprehend the kind and favourable diſpenſations of providence, with thoſe of his righteous ſeverity; though ſometimes with a more particular reference to one of them, than to the other. In the paſſage now under conſideration, it ſeems to be uſed in this large, comprehenſive ſenſe; thoſe judgments of God which are ſuppoſed to be "made manifeſt", being not only acts and inſtances of his vindictive juſtice againſt Babylon; but alſo manifeſtations of his truth, goodneſs and faithfulneſs to the upright, as he is the "King of ſaints." Sometimes the phraſe ought to be underſtood in a ſtill more extenſive ſenſe; ſo as to include the laws of God, and the execution of them, both in rewarding the good, and in puniſhing the wicked: i. e. it comprehends whatever God does, conſidered in the character of the moral governor, the lawgiver, and the judge of the world. In this moſt comprehenſive ſenſe, God's judgments are often ſaid to be "right," to be "righteous," &c. &c. &c.

However, I muſt juſt obſerve, That as the light of nature ſhows the world to be under a moral government and Governor, faithful, good, and righteous; ſo revelation, not only ſometimes aſſerts this, but always ſuppoſes, and takes it for granted, as the foundation and ground-work of all; as the baſis on which the whole fabrick ſtands. The whole ſcheme of our redemption by Chriſt, from firſt to laſt, in all its parts, is grounded upon this ſuppoſition. For certainly the chriſtian revelation preſuppoſes mankind to be anteeedently under the righteous government of God, and accountable to him for their actions; ſince it propoſes a method for our eſcaping the puniſhment due to the tranſgreſſors of His laws. It ſuppoſes God to be good and merciful; ſince this very method of ſalvation for ſinners, could originate in nothing but goodneſs and mercy—["God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotton Son," &c.—] It either aſſerts, or takes it for granted, that God does, in the courſe of his providence, even in all ages, reward and puniſh here, in ſome degree, the good and the wicked reſpectively, both individuals and whole communities. But the chriſtian revelation is more eſpecially a confirmation of the morality of God's government, as it ſo expreſly teaches us, That there is a time of retribution approaching, wherein the righteous ſhall receive a glorious recompence of reward; and the wicked, the puniſhment which their ſins deſerve, though delayed for a ſeaſon; and all men in general,

general, receive the things done in the body, whether good or bad. This will be the completion and perfection of that moral ſcheme and plan, which is already eſtabliſhed; which is carrying into execution from age to age; and which is plainly diſcernable to thoſe who are not loth to ſee and acknowledge it; diſcernable, even from our own frame and conſtitution, and from every day's experience. For we find a law of righteouſneſs written on our hearts, though we may try to expunge and diſannul it, by reaſon of the law of ſin that is in our members, and which wars againſt it. We find ourſelves intruſted in ſome ſenſe by the Author of our being, with our own happineſs; we find that virtue is the road to felicity; and vice, to miſery here. Nor is there the leaſt preſumption in reaſon, againſt the general doctrine of revelation, That our good and bad deeds, or at leaſt the effects of them, ſhall follow us into another ſtate, where this moral ſcheme ſhall appear in its perfection, both in the goodneſs, and in the righteous ſeverity of God. For there may be certain grand periods in the moral, as well as in the natural world; both a ſeed-time, and a time of harveſt; in the latter of which, he that has before "ſowed to the fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh "reap corruption;" and he that hath "ſowed to the "ſpirit, ſhall of the ſpirit reap everlaſting life." And you know who has ſaid in this allegorical way,—"The harveſt is the end of the world," &c.

PART

PART IV.

Of our Obligation to fear, glorify and worſhip God.

THIS paſſage of ſcripture leads us, in the next place, to conſider the obligation which we are under to fear, glorify and worſhip God; which obligation reſults from his perfections, and the relation in which he ſtands towards us—"Who ſhall not *fear* "thee, O Lord, and *glorify* thy name?—All nations "ſhall come and *worſhip* before thee". And who can doubt his obligation to do thus, if God is ſuch a Being as he has been imperfectly repreſented to be, in the foregoing parts of this diſcourſe? if he is indeed the "Lord God almighty"? if his works are thus "great and marvellous"? if he is the "King of "Saints"? if his ways are all "juſt and true" if he "only is holy"? if his "judgments" are, and will be, thus "made manifeſt"? What man? what nation, ſhall not fear, adore and worſhip a Being, ſo glorioufly great, powerful, juſt and good!

THERE is One, and but One, to be feared: And certainly you can be in no doubt, Who that One is. There is a harmony and uniformity of deſign viſible in the works of nature and providence, which ſhows that all originally proceeds from, and is governed by ONE: Which dictate of nature, or reaſon, is abundantly ratified and confirmed by revelation. For it is as clearly and expreſly declared, That there is but

"One

" One God", as it is, that there is but " one Media-
" tor between God and men"[a]: as plainly, That
" there is but One God, the Father, of whom are
" all things", as that there is but " One Lord,
" Jeſus Chriſt".[b] And the moſt diſtinguiſhing title or characteriſtic of this One God, in the new teſtament, is, " The God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt"[c]. He, undoubtedly it is, that excluſively of all other beings, is here ſtiled the " Lord God Almighty"; the " King of Saints"; and of whom it is ſaid, that He " only is holy",&c. And certainly it is equally our duty and our intereſt to fear, glorify and obey, this " One Lawgiver, who is able to ſave and to de-
" ſtroy"[d]; the " Father of all, who is above all,
" and thro' all, and in us all"[e]; who is God omni-preſent, even " from everlaſting to everlaſting". Is it not altogether reaſonable for us, weak, dependent, imperfect creatures, to reverence, worſhip, and obey Him that made us, and all things? Him, in whom " we live, and move, and have our being? Him, in whom all conceivable perfections, whether natural or moral, are united, even in an infinite degree; (if it be not a ſoleciſm to ſpeak of degrees in infinity, and perfection) and who governs the univerſe in the exerciſe of theſe perfections? Men who do not thus fear and ſerve God, muſt counteract their own nature; I mean their rational, intellectual and moral nature;

[a] 1 Tim. ii. 5. [b] 1 Cor. viii. 6. [c] 1 Pet. i. 3. [d] Jam. iv. 12. [e] Eph. iv. 6.

nature, the light and dictates of their own consciences. For they cannot but see and feel, in some degree at least, that they ought to do thus; that they are under an indispensable obligation, in point of reason and fitness, as well as interest, to do it; so that, if they do it not, but the contrary, they must needs be "without excuse", and "condemned of themselves".

It is no sooner known that there is really such a glorious Being existing, than every man's own heart, even antecedently to any formal, rational process, tells him in general what his duty is; what is the proper, practical inference; how he ought to stand affected towards God; and what part he has to act. And if men will but duly consider their own frame and make, their reason will, upon a little reflection, ratify these first dictates of their hearts and consciences. Are we not so constituted by the Author of our being, that great power excites a certain awe in us, unless we are, or at least imagine ourselves to be, more powerful than He, in whom we observe it? Does not a common man almost shudder at the thoughts of a giant; one of the sons of *Anak*, even tho' he knows he is long since dead, and can do him no harm? Does not superior wisdom amongst men, naturally attract respect and reverence? I mean, from all who have themselves wisdom enough to discern it? Is not this our reverence of superior wisdom heightened, when that wisdom is in conjunction with veracity, and justice duly tempered with goodness and mercy? I mean, so as not to degenerate into cruelty on one hand, nor

into

into any childiſh weakneſſes on the other? Is not our reverence ſtill heightened, when theſe qualities are found in age? in one, whoſe head was hoary, even before we ſaw the light? Is it not ſtill increaſed, if this ſame perſon is our prince and lawgiver, and one on whoſe protection we depend? (a ſuppoſition which, God be praiſed! we may now make with ſome propriety—) Yea, would not our reverence of him be ſtill greater, if we were in his preſence, and under his eye, than while he is abſent from us, or we from him? Yea, I will aſk once more, whether our reſpect and reverence to ſuch an earthly ſovereign, would not be greater, if we actually ſaw him exerting his great and good qualities, in redreſſing the wrongs of his ſubjects; in puniſhing the evil and rebellious, and protecting and patronizing the good; than while we only believe or hear that he does thus, as occaſion and opportunity are offered? If I were not almoſt tired with aſking, and you, perhaps, with hearing queſtions, I would ſtill aſk, whether, all theſe qualities, being united in the ſame perſon, and all theſe circumſtances concurring to heighten our eſteem and reverence; we ſhould not, of courſe, reſign ourſelves up to the will of their object, and chearfully obey him; thinking ourſelves happy in his favour, [a] and dreading the thoughts of his juſt diſpleaſure as one of the greateſt of evils? I preſume there is no man, who underſtands theſe queſtions, which are not indeed

 difficult

[a] Vid. Bp. Butler's Serm. 4th Edit. P. 269—272.

difficult to be comprehended, but what would anſwer them all in the affirmative, if he ſincerely ſpoke the dictates of his heart, without indulging to chicanery, and to the making of ſubtile evaſions. It would evidently be fit and reaſonable for us to be affected towards ſuch a perſon as has been deſcribed, in the manner above expreſſed; and you would think that man very unreaſonable, a kind of monſter notwithſtanding his human ſhape, who did not thus reverence, and thus demean himſelf towards, ſo great and good a perſonage, ſtanding in ſuch a relation towards him.

HERE, then, you have the ground-work, and principles of religion in your own frame and conſtitution; ſo that the longer you reflect, the more reaſon you will ſee to fear, and adore God, and to keep his commandments. For is there any being ſo powerful as the "Lord God Almighty?" Is there any one ſo wiſe as the "only wiſe God?" any one ſo righteous and faithful as He, all whoſe ways are "juſt and true?" any other ſo pure and ſpotleſs as He, who "only is "holy?" Any one ſo venerable in reſpect of his years and age, as the "Ancient of days," who "was, "and is, and is to come?" Is there any one ſo properly our ſovereign, and lawgiver, as the "King of "ſaints," whoſe "kingdom ruleth over all?" any one who is ſo near to, and conſtantly preſent with us, as He who is omnipreſent, "in whom we live," and who is "through all, and in us all?" In fine, is there any one, whoſe judgments, and the effects of them,

them, are and will be made ſo manifeſt before our eyes, as His, who is "the Judge of all the earth?" His, whoſe providence now governs the world, and who will hereafter judge it "in righteouſneſs, by that "man whom He hath ordained"?—Who then ſhall not fear and reverence? who, not glorify and praiſe? who, not obey, Him? Shall not all nations come and worſhip before him, before whom "all nations are "as nothing;" and "Lebanon is not ſufficient to "burn, nor the beaſts thereof ſufficient for a burnt-"offering!" [a] Your obligation thus to fear, glorify and worſhip the great God, reſults ſo immediately and plainly from his nature, and your own, and the relation in which he ſtands towards you, that you muſt, I had almoſt ſaid, uncreate your Creator or yourſelves, and thereby deſtroy this relation, before your reaſon will abſolve you from ſuch obligation. But what I intend is, that while God is God, and men are men, they are bound by all the ties of reaſon religiouſly to fear, and worſhip, and obey Him.

THERE are ſome things, even at firſt view ſo plain and obvious to fair and honeſt minds, as almoſt to preclude any reaſoning or agumentation concerning them. The obligations to practical religion in general, ſuppoſing there is really a God, ſeem to be of this kind. They can ſcarce be made plainer by reaſoning, than they are without it; as the ſun will not become the more viſible to a man who opens his eyes, by all the

[a] Iſa. xl. 16, 17.

reaſonings of philoſophers about it. Accordingly, in the paſſage of ſcripture now under conſideration, there is no formal ratiocination; but only a warm, devout and rapturous exclamation, the natural dictate of a good heart, and which will immediately find its way to the hearts and conſciences of all men, who have not very groſly corrupted and debauched their own nature—"Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and "glorify thy name."—"All nations ſhall come and "worſhip before thee!"—However, there is, I ſuppoſe, ſomewhat of the prophetic kind in theſe laſt words: They do not only expreſs what is right and fitting; but alſo ſuggeſt what ſhall eventually come to paſs, after God's judgments are made manifeſt in the original ſenſe of the paſſage; that ſenſe which was mentioned in the introductory part of this diſcourſe. For ALL nations ſhall actually come and worſhip before God, when Babylon the great is deſtroyed.

THE obligations we are under in general religiouſly to reverence, worſhip and obey God, being, as I ſuppoſe, ſufficiently evident: it may be proper to ſubjoin here, that God's holy word ought to be the rule of the worſhip, ſervice and obedience which we pay to him. How greatly the chriſtian religion has been, and ſtill is corrupted, in moſt countries where it is profeſſed, even to the introduction of the groſſeſt ſuperſtitions and idolatries, there is neither time nor occaſion now particularly to mention. It becomes us

to

to take heed that we do not ourſelves add to, or even countenance, in any degree, theſe corruptions. Eſpecially if we have any well-grounded perſwaſion upon our minds, what is intended in the new teſtament by Babylon, that "mother of harlots and abominations," we ſhould keep at a diſtance from her; for God will, ſooner or later, make her plagues wonderful, as well as manifeſt. "What concord hath Chriſt with "Belial, ſays St. *Paul* [a]:—And what agreement hath "the temple of God with idols?"—"Wherefore "come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, "ſaith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing, "and I will receive you; and will be a Father un-"to you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and danghters "ſaith the Lord Almighty." A corrupt and idolatrous church is not the leſs to be ſeparated from, becauſe ſhe diſhonours Chriſt and his religion by calling herſelf after his worthy name: And it well deſerves to be remarked, That St. *John*, in the midſt of the viſions which he had of the woes coming in ſucceſſion upon Babylon, now "become the habitation of devils, "and the hold of every foul ſpirit, and a cage of e-"very unclean and hateful bird," [b] tells us that he heard a "voice from heaven, ſaying, Come out of "her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her "ſins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." [c]

I HOPE I ſhall give no juſt ground of offence to any, (which I ſhould be very loth to do) by adding here, That

[a] 2 Cor. vi. 15,——18. [b] Rev. xviii. 2. [c] Ver. 4.

That for the ſame general reaſon that we ought not to go wholly over to that apoſtate church which the ſcriptures ſometimes intend by the name Babylon, we ought not to conform to, or ſymbolize with her, in any of her corruptions, and idolatrous uſages: but to keep at as great a diſtance from them as poſſible, by ſtrictly adhering to the holy ſcriptures in doctrine, diſcipline, worſhip and practice. Nor does this ſeem to me to be a needleſs caveat, even in any proteſtant country whatever: For I am verily perſuaded that there is not now, nor has been for many generations paſt, any national church, wholly and abſolutely free from theſe corruptions. Notwithſtanding our boaſted reformation, it is, alas! but too evident that we are not yet paſt that long, dark and corrupt period of the chriſtian world, to which St. *John* refers, when ſpeaking of myſtical Babylon, he ſays, That "ALL NATIONS had drunk of the wine of the wrath of her "fornication; and that the KINGS of the earth had "committed fornication[a] with her".[b] We ſhould therefore conform to our Bibles, whatever becomes of

[a] All know that under the Moſaic diſpenſation, departing from the worſhip of the only true God, and the worſhipping of idols and falſe ones, was often expreſſed by "going a whoring after "other gods," by "committing fornication" and "adultery", &c. It is not therefore ſtrange that the like abominations under the goſpel diſpenſation, ſhould be expreſſed by the like terms; that the head, or MOTHER-CHURCH, during that grand and amazing apoſtacy which is plainly foretold, ſhould be characteriſed as "the mother of harlots;" that all thoſe kings and nations which follow her example, ſhould be ſaid to commit "fornication" with her, and to drink of the "wine of the "wrath of her fornication." [b] Rev. xviii. 3.

of the decrees of councils, popes or kings; tho' they ſhould, like one of the ancient kings of literal Babylon, ſet up their golden images and idols, and command us to "fall down and worſhip, at what time we "hear the ſound of the cornet, flute, harp, ſackbut "pſaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of muſic"[a]; yea, tho' they ſhould point us to their "furnaces, heated "one ſeven times hotter than they were wont to be "heat"[b]. We read of a ſtill more terrible fire, into which the "beaſt" ſhall be caſt, "and with him "the falſe prophet that worketh miracles before him, "with which he deceiveth them that receive the "mark of the beaſt, and them that worſhip his "image"[c]. But bleſſed is he that feareth, and glorifieth, and patiently worſhipeth the "Lord God "almighty", the "King of Saints", according to his word and inſtitutions; even he that doeth HIS commandments, "that he may have right to the tree "of life, and may enter in thro' the gates into the "city. For without are dogs, and ſorcerers, and "whoremongers, and murderers, and IDOLATERS, "and whoſoever loveth and maketh a LIE[d].

[a] Dan. iii. 5. [b] Ver. 19. [c] Rev. xix. 20.
[d] Chap. xxii. ver. 14, 15.

PART

PART V.

Practical Reflections upon the Subject, relative to the Occaſion.

BUT it is perhaps more than time for me to proceed to the practical part of my diſcourſe; and to apply the ſubject to ourſelves and the preſent occaſion. We have lately had a very ſtriking and awakening memento, or rather example, of the greatneſs, and the marvellous nature of God's works; when this continent, for eight or nine hundred miles together, with the neighbouring iſlands, and the Atlantic ocean, were at once ſhaken, and thrown into convulſions. That this is truly the work of God, and that it is both a great and marvellous one, I ſuppoſe I need not go about to prove to you, after what has been ſaid above. Indeed, if I miſtake not, you all diſcover'd plainly enough, that this was your ſenſe of it, at the time of this event, to ſay nothing of what you have done ſince, or do at preſent.

You think then, that an Earthquake is one of the mighty works of God; You think juſtly. And whenever you behold, or experience theſe his great and marvellous works, it may well excite your fear of him: for how glorioufly terrible in majeſty is that Being, who is able to produce ſuch aſtoniſhing effects! But ſhall I tell you, that you every day behold greater works than theſe? far more illuſtrious diſplays and manifeſtations of the power of God? This is really the

the truth. Did not God create the whole earth? Does he not daily uphold it in being, with all that it contains? And is not the creating and upholding the whole, a far greater work than ſhaking and removing a ſmall part of it? Certainly it is. You can, therefore, never look upon the earth even when it does not quake, without being ſilently admoniſhed to fear and obey him that made it; as truly admoniſhed to do ſo, as when the "pillars of heaven tremble", and the "Higheſt gives his voice"; tho' ſome may, perhaps, have never attended to this ſilent and conſtant admonition. But when you extend your views beyond this earth, to the numerous worlds around; when you look up in a ſerene night, and attentively behold this glorioufly "dreadful ALL"; when you ſee "worlds on worlds," and ſyſtems on ſyſtems "compoſing one univerſe;" when you ſeriouſly contemplate Him, whoſe hand once form'd, and ſtill graſps, and moves, and directs this ſtupendous and amazing Whole; whenever you do thus, I ſay, you cannot but think even an earthquake, or the earth itſelf, comparatively ſpeaking, a little work; a far leſs, than innumerable others. One principal reaſon why an earthquake appears to be ſuch a great and ſtupendous work as it does to moſt people, is becauſe, inſtead of enlarging their minds by contemplating objects that are truly great, they narrow them by attending only to little things; ſuch toys and trifles, I mean, as are found in this world, the riches and vani-

ties of it; the pomps, the thrones, the ſcepters and diadems of kings. It is not ſtrange that they who can think ſuch little things great, and admire them as being ſo; they whoſe thoughts are ever grovelling on the ground on which they tread, and never aſcend above it; it is not ſtrange, I ſay, that ſuch perſons ſhould be aſtoniſhed at the grandeur of an earthquake, even though they had nothing to fear from ſuch an event. For it muſt be confeſſed that there is nothing, I mean no merely natural occurrence or event in this world, which can more properly be called great, than ſuch an one. But to a contemplative man, as was intimated before, there are many other works of God, which ſtill more fully declare his power and glory; and which are therefore to ſuch men, louder calls to reverence and obey him; tho' leſs calculated to miniſter terror and amazement.

When we behold, or reflect upon, the great and marvellous works of God, all-powerful, wiſe, holy, juſt and good the effect hereof ſhould not be the exciting in us a fruitleſs admiration of, and aſtoniſhment at them; but the exciting in us a due reverence and eſteem of of Him, whoſe works they are; till from admiring them, we come to admire, to fear, to love nothing beſides Him, the Lord God almighty, the King of ſaints, who only is holy. For all his works are little, in compariſon of Him; and can claim no regard or notice, any farther than they may help to lead us to the knowledge, and to worthy conceptions of Him. And unleſs our thoughts are thus led

to

to God from his works, ſo as to inſpire us with the reverence, love and admiration of him, we had almoſt as good ſtare at puppet-ſhows, as contemplate the heavens.

An earthquake is indeed very peculiarly adapted to rouſe and awaken the minds of the inconſiderate, and of thoſe who forget God; and to beget in them that fear of him, which is "the "the beginning of wiſdom"; more adapted to this end, even than the greater and more conſtant manifeſtations of his eternal power and godhead. This is evident from the effect: for many who diſregard theſe conſtant diſplays of God's power, and other perfections, from year to year, are yet alarmed by an earthquake, and impreſſed with a ſerious ſenſe of religion. How many, who were perhaps never excited to fear God, by beholding the heavens, which declare his glory, "the moon and the ſtars which he has or-"dained," have been excited hereto, by theſe late occurrences of his providence? Where is that ſinner, ſo tho'tleſs, ſo ſtupid and abandoned, whoſe "fleſh "did not tremble for fear of God, and who was not "afraid of his judgments," when the earth ſo lately ſhook and trembled? Nor were theſe fears excited in them without the higheſt reaſon, when we reflect that God has often declared in his holy word, that earthquakes are, ſometimes at leaſt, ſent in his righteous diſpleaſure; not meerly for the warning and admonition of ſome ſinners, but for the deſtruction of others: And when we reflect what amazing deſola-

tion he has often actually wrought by them in the earth! Some recent examples and inſtances whereof, we have indeed, now within a day or two, heard of in Europe. The particulars of which are ſo awful and terrible, that I ſhall not now enumerate them; for I have no inclination, were it in my power, to throw you in a panic; but only to reaſon calmly with you "of "righteouſneſs, temperance and judgment to come"; of your obligation to fear and obey Him, whoſe works are thus great and marvellous, and his judgments thus made manifeſt in the earth[a]. It is not only

[a] Since the delivering of this diſcourſe, we have had an account of the more awful and amazing diſtruction of the city of *Lisbon*, St. *Eubes*, &c. the events alluded to above, being the effects of the earthquake at *Cadiz* and *Seville*, of which we had heard at that time. And theſe events may not only very naturally bring to our minds what St. *John* ſays concerning the effect of that "great earthquake" of which he ſpeaks, when "the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came "in remembrance before God"; when he ſaw "the kings "of the earth", the "merchants which were made rich by "her", "every ſhip-maſter, and all the company in ſhips", "and ſailors, and as many as trade by ſea, ſtanding afar off, "and crying when they ſaw the ſmoke of her burning"; I ſay theſe events may not only very naturally bring to our minds what St. *John* ſays concerning that "great earthquake"; but may alſo very juſtly, all circumſtances being duly conſidered, confirm our belief, that theſe were really the viſions of God, not the reveries of man; and conſequently, that all thoſe woes and plagues which he ſaw coming upon Babylon, (I mean thoſe which are not already fulfilled) ſhall in due time be moſt punctually accompliſhed upon her— However, we ſhould upon this, and all ſimilar occaſions, remember the words of our Saviour when he ſpeaks of thoſe on whom "the tower of Siloam fell", and thoſe whoſe "blood *Pilate* mingled with their ſacrifices": —"Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh". Luk. xiii. 1——5.

only natural, but juſt and proper for wicked men to tremble and to be afraid, when God thus ariſeth to ſhake terribly the earth, and his judgments are abroad in it. And if their own lives are ſpared, they ought not only to tremble at, but to learn righteouſneſs from, theſe alarming events. This, thro' the tender mercies of our God, is the caſe of thoſe wicked men who are here preſent before Him, if there are any perſons preſent, to whom that character belongs. Would to God, there were not!——

But upon the preſumption that there are at leaſt ſome ſuch; (not an unnatural or uncharitable preſumption, I conceive, conſidering the largeneſs of the aſſembly, and the preſent ſtate of religion in the world) Upon this preſumption, I ſay, let me be allowed to addreſs myſelf briefly and ſeriouſly to ſuch unhappy men; not as their enemy, God forbid! but as their friendly monitor—Let your hearts and tongues be filled with the high praiſes of God, that your lives have been thus graciouſly preſerved; and that the thing which you ſo greatly and juſtly feared, not to ſay deſerved, is not come upon you. What diſtreſs and anxiety were you lately in! Where, alas! and what would you now have been, had the earth opened her mouth and ſwallowed you up? or had your falling houſes cruſhed you to death? examples of both of which, there have been many in former times, and ſome very lately. Had either of theſe been your own caſe, I ſay, where, and what would you now have been!—Wretched, and accurſed of God, in that region

region of darkneſs and deſpair, where the rich man lift up his eyes being in torment! But in the time of your apparent danger, when "the ſorrows "of death compaſſed you, and the pains of hell gat "hold upon you," [a] God who is long-ſuffering and rich in mercy, as well as holy and all-powerful, "inclined his ear;" [b] and you are ſtill among the living. What then will you "render unto the Lord "for all his benefits towards you"? [c] and particularly for this? Will you not now praiſe and glorify his name? The marriner (at his "wits end" while the ſtorm beats upon him, and when every ſleeper "awakes and calls upon his God:" the mariner, I ſay,) when the ſtorm is over, bleſſes Him whom winds and ſeas obey, that he has eſcaped foundering and ſhipwrack. Thus it becomes you to do, whom God has mercifully preſerved when in at leaſt equal perils by land. Did you not make your vows to him in the time of your diſtreſs? And will you now pay them [d]? Will you not forever hereafter praiſe and reverence, worſhip and ſerve the Lord God Almighty, the King of ſaints, and the Preſerver even of ſinners, tho' He who only is holy? Will you not now, at length, break off your ſins by righteouſneſs; and implore the forgiveneſs of them through him, in whom God is reconciling the world unto himſelf? Did you not reſolve to do thus, in the late time of your terror and amazement? And will you not now perform theſe vows and engagements? Were there not ſome particular

[a] Pſalm cxvi. 3. [b] Ver. 2. [c] Ver. 12. [d] Ver. 14.

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It is not only melancholly, but aſtoniſhing, to obſerve how ſoon wicked men often get rid of their juſt fears and apprehenſions of the divine diſpleaſure, and break through their better reſolutions, when they no longer ſee the rod of God held out, and ſhaken at them. They act as if they thought he then ceaſed to be that juſt, and holy, and almighty Being which they apprehended him to be, while they thought themſelves in immediate danger of his judgments; as if they thought he was not "angry with the wicked "every day," but only when there are ſome alarming occurrences in the courſe of his providence; and

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ſo return to their former vices and impieties, almoſt as ſoon as the particular evils and dangers they apprehended, are removed. Suffer me therefore to warn you againſt this folly; and to beſeech you, as you value the ſalvation of your ſouls, not to ſuffer that religious ſenſe of things, which was lately awakened in you by theſe awful occurrences, to wear off; and ſo return to your old crimes. At the time of, or immediately after, the late earthquakes, did vicious men find in themſelves any inclination to repeat their old ſins; and to break the commandments of God? Did the drunkard then think of his bowl or bottle? Did the whoremonger and adulterer then find any diſpoſition to perpetrate their horrid crimes? Did the thief at that time meditate future thefts and villanies? Did the man who was unjuſt in his commerce and dealings, then ſcheme and plan future fraud and injuſtice againſt his neighbour? Did the miſers heart then repoſe itſelf on his god?—I mean, his gold? Did he then "make gold his hope; and "ſay unto the fine gold, Thou art my confidence!" Did the profane ſwearer and blaſphemer then aſk God to damn either himſelf or his neighbour? I can hardly believe there was a man amongſt us ſo intemperate, ſo lewd, ſo addicted to the hidden things of darkneſs and diſhoneſty, ſo devoted to his mammon, or ſo profane and impious, as to do thus at the mentioned time. No: how wicked ſoever ſome of you might poſſibly be; yet you all then feared God; or at leaſt were afraid of him, and afraid to ſin againſt him; becauſe you

you then really believed him to be holy, juſt and almighty. The drunkard was then far from deſiring to indulge to intemperance: The burning adulterer's blood then ran cold in his veins: The thief would then have dropped the ſpoil from his hand; and he that ſtole, reſolved to ſteal no more: The moſt zealous worſhipper of mammon, then wiſhed for a treaſure in heaven: And the blaſphemer's oaths and curſes, were turned into prayers and ſupplications. All, all then thought, that God was worthy to be feared, and glorified, to be worſhipped and obeyed.

WELL: Do you ſuppoſe that God is changed; and now become a different Being from what he ſo lately was, when he ſhook the earth, and cauſed the pillars of heaven to tremble? Do you imagine, becauſe you do not now ſee theſe ſame manifeſtations of his power, juſtice and holineſs, that of almighty he is now become weak! of juſt, regardleſs of juſtice! of holy, unholy! And conſequently, that though he was lately ſo proper an object of your fear, yet he is no longer ſo; but that you may now ſafely contemn him? that you may trample upon his laws? that you may tread under foot his Son? that you may diſregard his word, and profane his day? that you may neglect his worſhip, his inſtitutions and ordinances, and deſpiſe his threatnings? Can any man be ſo extravagantly fooliſh as to think thus! Verily, he is the Lord, and he "changeth not;" the "Father of lights, with "whom there is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of "turning." Tho' the earth ſhould never "tremble"

again, he is always the ſame holy, righteous, powerful and jealous God, which you lately conceived him to be, when he "looked upon it": He is the ſame when he dwells in the calm, and all nature ſmiles around, as when he "makes darkneſs his ſecret place," and "flies upon the wings of the wind;" when he gives his voice in thunder, "a ſmoke going out of his "noſtrils, and fire out of his mouth, devouring!"

TAKE heed, therefore, that you do not ſuffer thoſe juſt ſentiments concerning the power and holineſs of God, and your duty to him, which were lately awakened in you, to be effaced; cheriſh and improve them; and let them be written on your hearts as with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond; or as graven on the rock for ever. You ought certainly always to fear, always to glorify, always to worſhip and obey him, who is always almighty, always holy, always juſt, always preſent with you; even tho' he ſhould never manifeſt himſelf and his power to you in the ſame terrible manner. But you are to remember, that God may perhaps viſit us with other, and far greater earthquakes, or with terrible and deſtructive inundations of the ſea, as he has lately viſited others, in divers places; or with other deſolating judgments: For he never wants means and ways by which to puniſh the diſobedient, even in this world. But, as was ſaid before, tho' his judgments ſhould not now be made manifeſt in any of theſe ways; yet he is always the ſame glorious, righteous, almighty and terrible God; even "yeſterday, to day and forever". And he will

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moſt ſurely render to every man according as his work ſhall be, in the day that he has appointed for that end, whether it be near or remote. You ſhould therefore have an habitual reverence of him upon your minds; ſuch a one, as thro' his grace and aſſiſtance, will always be productive of obedience and holineſs in your lives. "As he which has called you is holy, ſo be ye holy "in all manner of converſation; becauſe it is writ- "ten, Be ye holy, for I am holy. And if ye call "on the Father, who without reſpect of perſons, "judgeth according to every mans work, paſs the "time of your ſojourning here in fear. [a]

"HAPPY is the man that feareth alway; but he "that hardeneth his heart ſhall fall into miſchief" [b]! Happy, thrice happy are they, who ever religouſly reverence, and ſincerely obey almighty God; and who are the objects of his peculiar love and favour, thro' the glorious Mediator of the new covenant. Miſerable, beyond expreſſion miſerable are they, who are the objects of his righteous diſpleaſure, thro' ſin; thro' obſtinate impenitence and unbelief. What real harm or evil can come nigh the former, ſhielded by that hand that "garniſhed the heavens", and formed "the crooked ſerpent [c]!" What good can the latter expect, under his frown, whoſe "right hand ſhall teach "him terrible things [d]!" What worm can reſiſt omnipotence! What craft can evade the juſtice of the all-wiſe and holy One! Or who fly from him who is

 omnipreſent!

[a] 1 Pet. i. 15, 16, 17. [b] Prov. xxviii. 14. [c] Job. xxvi. 13. [d] Pſalm xlv. 4.

omnipreſent! If you fly to the moſt diſtant parts of the earth or ſea, he is there: if you aſcend to the higheſt heaven, behold he is there, if you deſcend to the loweſt hell, he is equally there! And whereever he is, he is always the ſame glorious almighty, wiſe and holy Being; the friend, the hope, the ſalvation of the good; the enemy, the terror, the deſtruction of the wicked! "When he giveth quietneſs, who "then can make trouble? and when he hideth his "face, who then can behold him? whether it be "done againſt a nation, or againſt a man only?"[a] Who then? what man? what nation ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name! Shall not all nations come and worſhip before thee!——

I WOULD willingly hope there may be ſome good effects of the late terrible earthquake, not only in this capital, where people have appeared to be ſo generally affected by it; but throughout the province; and indeed throughout theſe American plantations and colonies, as far at leaſt as it extended. Without running into a common-place invective againſt the times, or pretending to give a detail of the ſins and vices which are prevalent thro'out theſe Britiſh colonies, one may, I think, ſay with modeſty, that there is ample room for, and therefore great need of, a general reformation of manners; even amongſt perſons of all orders and degrees, without any exception. This alarming occurrence of providence, is, in the nature of it, as a moral means, calculated to produce ſuch an effect,

[a] Job. xxxiv. 29.

effect, ſuch a reformation. And conſidering our lives are all thus mercifully preſerved, one would willingly believe that God really meant it to us for good, that we might awake to righteouſneſs and not ſin; that we might be made partakers of his holineſs hereby; and ſo become the ſuitable objects of, and in due time enjoy, his favour; that kind protection, and thoſe ſmiles of his providence, which we at all times need, and, in ſome reſpects, more particularly at this.

To mention only one of theſe reſpects: We are, and have been for ſome time engaged in an unhappy, and, hitherto, an unproſperous war with our French neighbours on the continent, and their Indian allies, ſupported and encouraged in their encroachments and depredations by the power of France: With which martial, though perfidious nation, a more general war ſeems to be now on the point of breaking out. Four [a] (that is, in ſhort, all the late) expeditions made againſt them, for the ſecuring of our territories, have proved unſucceſsful; and not only unſucceſsful, but ſome of them fatal to a conſiderable number of Britiſh ſubjects; and not only ſo, but ſome of them at leaſt, very diſhonourable to the Britiſh name and arms: Not to ſay any thing of the great

[a] The expeditions here referred to, are two againſt Fort Du Queſne, that againſt Niagara, and that againſt Crown-Point: What has been attempted, and ſucceſsfully executed, at Nova-Scotia, chiefly by New-England-men, enliſted by Lieut. Col. *Winſlow* of the Maſſachuſetts-Bay, (not being ſo properly an expedition againſt our open enemies, as a neceſſary precaution againſt treacherous, or at leaſt juſtly ſuſpected people, living in the Britiſh dominions) not being included here.

great expence of theſe expeditions to the crown, and to theſe colonies.—How have theſe colonies lately bled! How are ſome of them ſtill bleeding, by treacherous and ſavage hands! What ſcenes of violence! of rapine! of fire! of murder! eſpecially on the frontiers of the ſouthern colonies!

Now though we have not, that I know of, any reaſon to doubt of the juſtneſs of our cauſe, with reference to our enemies on the continent; yet from God's fighting againſt us in his holy providence; from his thus defeating our attempts; from his thus giving our barbarian, and even worſe than barbarian enemies, our blood to drink; from his making us appear, not only not formidable, but even contemptible and ridiculous in their eyes; ſo that they laugh, and "eat us up as they eat bread!"—From God's thus fighting againſt us in his holy providence, I ſay, we have great reaſon to ſuſpect that we do not ſtand right with him as a people that is called by his name; but that we have before made him our enemy, by fighting and rebelling againſt him. Who, indeed, can doubt but that this is the caſe, if he ſeriouſly reflects, how little there is of pure and undefiled religion amongſt us? or rather, how much there is of flagrant immorality, profaneneſs and irreligion, throughout theſe colonies? I ſay theſe things from my heart; and hope they will not be looked upon only as words of courſe: For I do not allow myſelf to trifle with my Maker, or to take his holy and venerable name in vain, even in a Sermon, which would not ſanctify the

the deed. And there have been many other things of late years, in the courſe of divine providence towards us, beſides thoſe mentioned, which might juſtly make us fear, that God is greatly provoked at our ſins.

THE late viſitation of his providence in the formidable earthquake, which extended almoſt throughout theſe Britiſh colonies, ſeems to me, if I can underſtand the language in which it ſpeaks, to be a loud call to them all to conſider of their ways; and to return to God by unfeigned repentance, and a general reformation. It is to be hoped, that none of them which have heard, will diſregard the admonition; or ſo ſoon forget it as the ſame ſort of warnings are forgotten in *ſome* of our Weſt-India Iſlands, where they are more frequent; where there has been at leaſt ONE, which ſhould never be forgotten; and where, nevertheleſs, by what we hear, the wickedneſs of the people is increaſed to the very heavens, ſo that were not God's mercies far above them, we might conclude that their utter ruin and deſtruction could not be long deferred! God forbid, that we on the continent ſhould thus refuſe to "hear the "rod, and him that appointed it," though we have been ſo gently chaſtized by it. It is to be hoped, that we ſhall be effectually taught by it, in conjunction with the other late corrective diſpenſations of divine providence, to fear the Lord God almighty, the King of Saints, who only is holy, whoſe works are great and marvellous, all whoſe ways are juſt and true, and whoſe

whoſe judgments are at this time made ſo manifeſt in the earth; that ſo iniquity may not be our ruin, but that God, even our own God, may delight to bleſs and build us up; to proſper us againſt our enemies, inſtead of pulling us down, and deſtroying us by them. Who knows, but this may be one deſign of our good and gracious God, who is the governor among the nations, in viſiting and admoniſhing us in this manner? If it is, we ſhould ſurely concur and fall in with it, by turning every one of us from our tranſgreſſions; and this, even though our future and eternal intereſt were out of the queſtion. For whatſoever is dear and valuable to us in this world, ſeems to be now at ſtake; and our ultimate dependence, you know, is upon God.

SHOULD France throw over a conſiderable body of well diſciplined and appointed troops into America, early in the ſpring, which ſeems not an improbable ſuppoſition, I almoſt tremble for the conſequence, notwithſtanding our numbers of raw men, however naturally-brave—Eſpecially if our military operations on the continent, which God forbid! inſtead of being conducted by wiſdom and due caution, by zeal and patriotiſm, by integrity and a determined fortitude, ſhould happen to be conducted by folly or raſhneſs, by irreſolution or party-ſpirit, by treachery or cowardice!—But perhaps any fears or ſuſpicions of this ſort, are perfectly chimerical and groundleſs; ſo that I ſhall ſay no more upon the point—

HOWEVER,

HOWEVER, ſuch is the preſent critical ſituation of our affairs, ſuch the aſpects of providence towards us, and ſo numerous our ſins againſt heaven, that all who value their lives, liberties or eſtates, not to ſay their ſouls, had need to fear God, and thereby endeavour to ſecure his favour and protection. And had I a voice that could be heard throughout theſe Britiſh governments, I would now lift it up like a trumpet; I would cry aloud and not ſpare —— "Repent, repent;" fear God, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance!—"Then ſhall thy light break "forth as the morning, and thine health ſhall ſpring "forth ſpeedily; and thy righteouſneſs ſhall go be"fore thee, and the glory of the Lord ſhall be thy "rereward. Then ſhalt thou call, and the Lord ſhall "anſwer—Then ſhall thy light riſe in obſcurity, "and thy darkneſs be as the noon-day: And the "Lord ſhall guide thee continually"—[a] But if we do not grieve, when God ſmiteth and chaſteneth us; if we refuſe to receive correction, and will not return to him; but "make our faces harder than a rock;" we may then juſtly fear that he will ſmite ſtill harder; and chaſtize us, not with whips, but with ſcorpions. If we perſevere in our diſobedience, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that he will repeat his ſtripes; and not only break the ſkin, and make us bleed a little; but that he will make us bleed in earneſt; yea, that he will "tread us in his anger, and trample us in his fury;" and (if I may go on with the ſcripture

[a] Iſa. lviii. 8,——11.

phraſeology) that "our blood will be upon his gar-"ments," till he has "ſtained all his raiment!"[a] When we conſider our demerits, we muſt acknowledge that God has hitherto corrected us with a Father's hand; and, if I may ſo expreſs it, has firſt mollified and bathed the rod with a ſalutary balſam, to heal the ſtripes which itſelf gave. Let us not, by our repeated tranſgreſſions, provoke him to dip it next in poiſon, that it may cauſe our wounds to feſter to our very heart and vitals; and in the end prove mortal!

I TREMBLE not only for my dear native country, when I conſider the ſins of it; but alſo for a *certain European nation,* which I will not mention by name: A nation bleſt with ſome peculiar advantages, civil and religious: A nation not much "exalted by righ-"teouſneſs," for a long time paſt: A nation often admoniſhed by providence, and ſorely ſcourged: A nation often threatened even with utter ruin and deſtruction: A nation often almoſt miraculouſly preſerved from ruin and deſtruction by her enemies, both foreign and domeſtic: And yet a nation where infidelity, irreligion, corruption and venality, and almoſt every kind of vice, ſeems to have been increaſing all the time!—Will not almighty God, who "only is holy," ſooner or later "viſit for theſe things? and will not "his ſoul be avenged on SUCH A NATION AS THIS!"[b] But to return to ourſelves.

LET

[a] Iſa. lxiii. 3. [b] Jer. v. 9.

LET us, my Brethren, hearken to the word of admonition; I do not mean my own, but God's. For his voice is loud and vocal, even in thoſe diſpenſations of his providence, which are the occaſion of our being aſſembled together in his houſe at this time: It is ſtill ſounding in our ears, unleſs we are like the deaf adder that ſtoppeth her ear, and will not hear. The language of it is the ſame in general with that of God's written word,—"Let the wicked forſake "his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and "let him return unto the Lord!" And if we duly attend to, and obey this voice of God, both in his word and in theſe viſitations of his providence, he will ſurely "have mercy on us, and abundantly par-"don;" for he is as good as great; and delighteth not in the death of ſinners: Nor are the works of his mercy and loving-kindneſs, either leſs, or leſs numerous, than thoſe of his righteous ſeverity, when his judgments are made manifeſt. Incline your ear therefore, and hear, and your ſoul ſhall live; ye ſhall eat that which is good, and your ſoul ſhall delight itſelf in fatneſs. We may juſtly hope for the ſmiles of divine providence, in giving us temporal proſperity, if we turn at God's reproof, and fear, and worſhip, and ſerve him, according to the goſpel of his Son, "in ſpirit and in truth." Let us not miſtake the nature of chriſtianity ſo widely, as to imagine that an idle, inoperative faith, or obſerving the external forms of religion, and crying, "The "temple of the Lord," will avail us without repen-

tance towards God, and " faith that worketh by " love" to Him, to our Redeemer, and fellow-men, and an univerſal obedience to his commandments. Much leſs ſhould we imagine, that we can recommend ourſelves to the divine favour, by furious party-zeal in religious matters; by indulging to a cenſorious ſpirit, and ſetting at nought our chriſtian proteſtant brethren, whoſe lives are blameleſs, on account of differences in opinion. The day which is coming, and which will reveal the ſecrets of all hearts, will ſhow that this is not the religion of Chriſt, but a contradiction to it; and that men who do thus, " know not what ſpirit they are of." But not to digreſs.

WHETHER we ſhall be generally amended and reformed, and, in conſequence hereof, enjoy the protection and ſmiles of divine providence, and outward proſperity, God only knows; tho' this is what all good men deſire and pray for: And whether their deſires and prayers are anſwered or not; yet they themſelves are ſecure and happy, even in the worſt and moſt " perillous times". Being ſuch, we ſhall enjoy what is infinitely more to be deſired than all temporal and worldly bleſſings together, the favour of almighty God, the King of ſaints, and a peaceful conſcience; an happineſs which the world can neither give nor take away. That ſenſe of ſecurity which good men commonly enjoy, is of more value, eſpecially in times of terror and diſtreſs to the wicked, than this and ten thouſand other worlds together;

ther: And no man, ſurely, who knows what this means, would make the exchange! Need I then caution good men againſt anxiety, even in theſe evil days? What tho' you ſee that iniquity abound, which may perhaps bring ſore calamities upon us? Your treaſure and hope are not in this world. What tho' treacherous and barbarous nations are now ravaging our borders, and laying waſte our country? What tho' you hear of wars and rumours of wars, of earthquakes and inundations in divers places, the ſea and the waves roaring? What tho' religion is generally at ſo low an ebb in the world, even in proteſtant countries? What tho' the idolatrous corrupters of chriſtianity, or myſtical Babylon, ſhould long triumph? What tho' the ſouls of them which have been "ſlain for the word of "God, and for the teſtimony which they held", (ſeen by St. *John* "under the altar") ſhould ſtill for ſome ages cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, "doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them "that dwell on the earth"! What tho' all things, ſhould wear even a much more gloomy aſpect than they do at preſent?—Still you know, that the Lord God almighty, the King of ſaints reigneth; that he only is holy, that all his ways are juſt and true; that his judgments will ſooner or later be made manifeſt; and that in his loving-kindneſs you are ſecure againſt all real harm, tho' the earth and heavens were mixed in one common chaos? The King of ſaints will never leave nor forſake thoſe, who are truly ſuch. Why then, O ſon of Sion, ſhould thy ſoul be caſt down, or diſ-

quieted

quieted within thee, if thy God reigneth! Hope thou in him; for thou ſhalt yet, and forever praiſe him: "Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble "knees": And glory in this, that thou underſtandeſt and knoweſt Him, "who exerciſeth loving-kindneſs, "judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth."[a] And

LET wicked men, if they regard their own happineſs either in this world or another, turn their feet unto God's teſtimonies, and be reconciled to Him thro' him that died for us, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us unto God. Then ſhall you alſo taſte and ſee that the Lord is indeed gracious; a very preſent help in trouble. For even when your fleſh and heart ſhall fail you, he will be "the ſtrength "of your heart, and your portion forever!"

To conclude: Let thoſe who truly fear God already, that King of ſaints who only is holy, daily endeavour, by his grace and aſſiſtance, to become more like him. Let the late viſitations of his providence, awaken you to greater zeal and diligence in his ſervice; that you may go on unto perfection. To which end, ever ſet before you, and aſpire at a conformity to, the glorious example of your Redeemer; of him, "whom not having ſeen you love; and in whom ye "greatly rejoice." There are ſome virtues and graces, in which even many good men are very defective: Particularly thoſe of meekneſs and patience under abuſes and inſults; charity and forbearance towards perſons of a different perſwaſion in religious matters; and

[a] Jer. ix. 24.

and love to their perſonal enemies. Even many of thoſe who ought ſurely to be "enſamples to the flock," of theſe ſublime and excellent virtues, ſometimes ſeem to exhibit a very different example to it—However theſe are certainly chriſtian virtues, by whomſoever diſregarded, or cultivated. And whatever difficulty may attend the exerciſe of them, we ought to learn them, and to improve in them, by contemplating the doctrine and example of the great "apoſtle and "high prieſt of our profeſſion". Theſe are ſome of his ſublimeſt leſſons of virtue and chriſtian perfection. Remember always, who and what you are; whoſe ſons; whoſe diſciples; to what world you ſtand related, with whom you are "joint heirs", and what is the hope of your calling. Act with a greatneſs and dignity becoming your character, and glorious expectations. Be above little reſentments, and even the provocations to great ones: Learn, ſometimes at leaſt, to ſilence calumny by ſilence: Return bleſſing for curſing, and good for evil, overcoming the latter by the former. If you are, or imagine your ſelves to be, wiſer and ſtronger than the others, learn to "bear "the infirmities of the weak"; to have "compaſſion "upon the ignorant, and them that are out of the "way". Let your candor and good-will be extenſive and conſpicuous: Scorn all bigottry, party-ſpirit, and narrowneſs of mind in religious matters; and allow to all men that liberty herein, which you take yourſelves, without hating or reviling them, merely becauſe they differ from you in opinion. Yea, learn

to

to love with a tender and unfeigned charity, your moſt malicious and abuſive enemies—So ſhall you act up to your holy profeſſion; ſo ſhall you be followers of them who thro' faith and patience inherit the promiſes; ſo ſhall you act ſutably to the relation in which you ſtand to Jeſus Chriſt "the Son of the living "God", who "is not aſhamed to call you brethren:" And ſo ſhall you be emphatically the children of your Father which is in heaven; "for he maketh his ſun "to riſe on the evil and on the good; and ſendeth "rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt—Be ye there- "fore perfect, even as your Father which is in hea- "ven is perfect."[a]

And thus, being not only by profeſſion, but by practice, the children of light and of the day, you ſhall at length "ſhine forth as the ſun in the king- "dom of your Father:"—Not, indeed, in all reſpects like that natural ſun, which is juſt now withdrawing his friendly, benign beams, from our hemiſphere: For in the ages to come, or rather when theſe momentary ages are no more; even long after that glorious luminary, that great and marvellous work of God, is become "black as ſackcloth of hair", and all his fires are extinct, your's ſhall ſtill burn and ſhine, not only with an undecaying, but an ever-increaſing luſtre, united with that God who is both LIGHT and LOVE, and in whom "THERE IS NO DARK- "NESS AT ALL!

[a] Mat. v. 45——48.

FINIS.

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Advertiſement.

THE Author of the foregoing Diſcourſe takes this opportunity to correct ſome miſtakes in the *Appendix* to the two Diſcourſes, which he lately publiſhed upon the ſame occaſion.

The moſt conſiderable apertures and chaſms made in the ground by the late earthquake, were not, as he then ſuppoſed, in the town of *Pembroke*, but in *Scituate*, near if not adjoining to it.

The accounts which he mentioned concerning the dividing of a great hill upon *Cape-Cod*, in halves, and of a prodigious chaſm at *Newington*, (of which accounts he then ſpoke doubtfully) now appear to have been without foundation.

The ſentence which ſtands thus, p. 3. of the *Appendix*, "This "was as much more conſiderable than the laſt on tueſday morn-"ing, as that was leſs conſiderable than the firſt", ought to have run thus—This was *almoſt* as much more conſiderable than the laſt on tueſday morning, as *it* was leſs, &c.

From what we have heard from *Halifax* ſince the publiſhing his *Appendix*, and from St. *Martin's*, reſpecting the inundation there, on the ſame day the earthquake happened here, it is at leaſt probable that the extent of the earthquake was twice as great as he then conjectured.

And laſtly: Whereas he incidentally gave it as his opinion, that the courſe of the earthquake was from S. W. to the N. E. he now thinks it much more probable, that it was nearly from N. W. to S. E. agreeable to what the very learned and worthy PROFESSOR of the *Math.* & *Phil.* at our College, has ſaid in the notes to his Diſcourſe on earthquakes, ſince publiſhed—A Diſcourſe which (if one who was ſo lately his pupil, might preſume to give his opinion) cannot fail to do great honor to its Author, to the learned ſociety of which he is a member, and to his country: Even notwithſtanding what Mr. *L. Evans* has, with ſufficient aſſurance, aſſigned as "a ſufficient reaſon for paying *Phila-*"*delphia* the particular diſtinction of making it the firſt Meridian "of America"; *viz.* That it "FAR EXCELS in the progreſs of "letters, mechanic arts, and the public ſpirit of its inhabitants", all other parts of the "Britiſh dominions on this continent!" [a] —But I am not ſo rude as to make invidious compariſons betwixt theſe governments in point of literature; or to ſay, Who is, or is not, THE BEST JUDGE IN AMERICA", [b] of this gentleman's late Map——

[a] Mr. *Evans's* Analyſis to a general Map, *&c.* p. 1.

[b] Dedication of Mr. *Evans's* Map.

J. M.

The most material Corrections.

Page	Line		Read
20	13		heaven of heavens
25	2	bottom	hypotheſes
36	14		his law.
38	13		juſt and true?
44	4		natural dictate
50	2		diadems
52	6		throw you into
54	11	bot.	will you not now
55	1	bot.	providence; and ſo
71	2		Even many of

N. B. *The need of ſome of theſe Corrections was obſerved time enough to make them before the whole impreſſion was finiſhed.*

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